

Grain Handlers' Strike

also has to do with fairness. I am not just talking about fairness for the workers but fairness for the farmers. If through no fault of the farmers demurrage charges are assessed, on waiting vessels, surely it is intrinsically unfair to require the farmers to pay those charges? Surely this is a proper charge on the nation as a whole? If, through a breakdown in industrial relations, a failure in our transportation system, or on account of weather or for countless other reasons, the loading of boats is delayed, then surely the cost of that delay should be borne by the nation as a whole, and not levied solely against the farmer?

● (1650)

If the government wants at least to appear to be even-handed and fair in this whole matter, in addition to the legislation we are dealing with the minister will announce tomorrow that the people of Canada, through the government, will pay these demurrage charges.

There has been much said about how much these Perry recommendations will involve. Both sides have come up with figures. I think we can now rely on the figures put out on August 29 as reported in the *Vancouver Sun*. That article was based on a statement by Mr. A.M. Runciman, who heads the United Grain Growers, in which the grain companies came up with a new figure in respect of what the Perry award would cost. The new figure is somewhat less than they originally suggested. The workers in turn came up with a figure somewhat more than they had originally said.

This article states:

"This is the figure (48 per cent) we wished had been used all along," declared A.M. Runciman, President of the United Grain Growers, in an interview from Winnipeg.

Runciman said 61 per cent was "valid" on the basis it was used, but "48 per cent is a more balanced presentation."

"We were not kidding anybody with the 61 per cent on the basis of the \$4.96 wage rate," said Runciman, although it had been widely quoted as the calculated increase on both wages and fringe benefits of the Perry report.

I hope that anyone else who may take part in this debate, for whatever purpose, either to magnify the amount of the award or, on the other side of the coin, to argue that it is not sufficient, will not bandy about the 61 per cent figure. From Mr. Runciman's statement, we should now rely on the 48 per cent figure.

I have spoken about farmers being fair. I suggest that they are and have no desire to treat their employees unfairly, but they must be in a position to treat them fairly. When economic conditions hurt them their ability to treat their employees fairly decreases. I am confident they are willing to accept the one-cent a bushel cost in order to get the grain moving again, although perhaps not with a smile, but they would more willingly accept it if something were done about the other costs which far outweigh the cost of this increase. The one cost to which I have referred is the demurrage charge. That should not be taken out of the farmers' pockets by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Let me give another illustration of what I mean, Mr. Speaker. A farmer, with whom I spent almost an hour speaking on the telephone the other night, told me about costs and gave me this illustration. A 64-inch plastic belt

[Mr. Benjamin.]

for his combine cost 79 cents in 1967, and cost 89 cents in 1968. Last week the same belt cost \$4.88 and the farmer had to buy two the same day.

I suggest that if we want to prevent the possibility of this kind of dispute taking place in this industry and in others in the future, it is long overdue on the part of the government and parliament to act in respect of these kinds of costs to our farmers.

I have a stack of papers before me which includes reports, charts, statistics and figures on both sides to the dispute, and from our own research people in the government. I have listened carefully to both the minister and the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander). I do not think this is the occasion for members of parliament to use up time going into all the details in order to present the arguments put forth by both sides.

The purpose of this legislation is to end the dispute, end the work stoppage and get grain moving. I am not sure how much a detailed debate would accomplish at this point of time, particularly in view of the fact that these arguments have been put forward by many people for almost a year, and I doubt that any airing we might give the facts here would shed any further light. What we want to do now is deal with the matter quickly. Therefore, my colleagues and I urge that we not only limit the length of speeches but also the number of speeches in order that we can implement this legislation.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall)—Housing—Consultation with provinces to expand programs; the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—Social security—Suggested increases in family allowances and old age pensions—Government position; the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. Holmes)—Agriculture—Request for progress report on re-establishment of sugar beet industry.

[Translation]

It is customary at this time for the House to proceed to the consideration of private members' business, but since the draw of private members' bills and motions will take place only tomorrow, no such business will be considered at this time.

In consequence of this, the House will return to the consideration of the grain handling operations bill.

[English]

As the draw in respect of private members' business will take place tomorrow, no business under this heading can be taken up at this time, as would normally be the case.